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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OIIP KPAO KMDR MU
SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: This week in the Omani dailies, private daily "Al Watan" expressed doubt that the new Israeli administration will negotiate to a final settlement with the Palestinians. Government daily "Oman" said on February 19 that Western elements do not want to see reconciliation in Sudan because it is against their interests. "Oman" on February 23 said that now is the time for the Gulf region to promote peace through dialogue, given the tone of understanding and respect from the American administration. END SUMMARY.

"MODERATION AND EXTREMISM"

¶2. On February 17, private Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) commented that the new government in Israel will likely not commit to negotiating for a final solution. According to "For a Just Ending of the Conflict":

"For many weeks, there was hope that the Israeli elections would result in a government that had the capacity to finalize negotiations. However, the Israelis are facing a new challenge: the election of a right wing government. In fact, Israeli leaders do not differentiate between moderation and extremism. This was evident during the negotiations sponsored by Egypt, during which Israel established new conditions that undid all the progress of the initial stages of negotiation."

"FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS"

¶3. On February 19, government Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) said that Western and non-Western parties do not want stability in Sudan for their own (unidentified) interests. "Stability of Sudan is Vital" said:

"The current attention paid to Sudan is not altruistic. The Sudanese have suffered from armed conflicts and violence that have claimed the lives of thousands, and the West has shown that it doesn't care. Now, though, Western and non-Western parties believe that the government of Khartoum is about to succeed in overcoming the differences in Darfur by reaching an agreement with the south. Thus, Sudan would be able to regain its former strength, which is what some parties don't want to happen, and for their own interests only. Despite all the recent attention to the situation in Darfur, it is important to support efforts to reach an agreement between Khartoum's government and the people of Darfur."

"TIME TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING"

¶4. "Oman" on February 23 said that the Gulf region must work towards regional understanding, especially given the new American administration's willingness to listen to the Arab world. According to "Trust and Mutual Commitment Maintains Stability of the Region":

"As Iraq is heading towards stability, it is natural that the world expects the Gulf region to deal with disputes and issues of concern for its countries through dialogue and a positive attitude. It is important to maintain peace and stability in the region because the Gulf has suffered from 30 years of war since the eruption of Iraqi/Iranian war. Now is the time to build understanding to avoid another tragedy, especially now that President Obama has initiated dialogue with and wants to listen to the Arab and Islamic world's views. This includes, of course, the Iranian nuclear file, which created disputes during the former administration." GRAPPO

To view the entire SMART message, go to URL http://repository.state.gov/_layouts/OSS_SearchResults.aspx?k=messageid:8128a8e0-38ae-4629-83